

faltered at all in Its love and zeal for the gladiatorial shows and beast contests on account of any doubt whether the exhibitions were "right." Tertullian, at the end of the second century, wrote a tract, *Ad Nationes*, in which he criticised the theater, and also another, *De Spectaculis*, against the public entertainments. Although the latter is chiefly controversial against heathen and heathenism, it contains direct and noble arguments against the games of the arena on account of their inhumanity. He says that the games were at first connected with funerals, and that the theater was a temple of Venus, under cover of which the games won a footing. That would mean, then, that they were at first under a convention of time, place, occasion, and religion. Correctly understood, therefore, what happened at Rome was that the convention was broken over and the exceptional rite was made the everyday usage, the religious sentiment being disregarded and the sensual entertainment alone being valued. When we have reached this point we can understand the original place of the games within the intellectual horizon of the nation, and

also the deep demoralization which they caused in later times.

They were consonant with early Roman mores which were war-like. Cicero thought them an excellent school to teach contempt

for pain and death. He cited gladiators as examples of bodily

exercise, courage, and discipline. He seems to have known that

some disapproved of the exhibitions, and he was disposed to

agree with them if the gladiators were others than criminals con-

demned to death.¹ A usage which is consonant with the tastes,

mores, and world philosophy of a people need work no corruption

on them, for it is under taboos and conventions ; but if all the restraints are taken away it enters into their life for just what it

is in its character,—sensual, cruel, bloody, obscene, etc. What

had been savage and bloodthirsty when the Romans were warriors

became base and cowardly when they never risked their own

blood in any way. Condemned criminals were compelled to take

roles in which they suffered torture and a frightful death, in order

to entertain the Roman crowd. Such roles were Prometheus,

Daedalus, Orpheus, Hercules, and Attys; Pasiphae and the bull

¹ *Tusc. Disp.*, II, 17.